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Letter dated 31 January 2006 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Beijing Declaration on Renewable Energy for Sustainable Development, which was adopted at the International Renewable Energy Conference 2005, held in Beijing on 7 and 8 November 2005 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

(*Signed*) **Wang** Guangya
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
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Annex to the letter dated 31 January 2006 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Beijing Declaration on Renewable Energy for Sustainable Development

1. We, Ministers and Government Representatives from 78 countries, having met at the International Renewable Energy Conference, held in Beijing on 7 and 8 November 2005, reaffirm our commitment to implement the outcomes of the Earth Summit, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the 2005 World Summit and to substantially increase, with a sense of urgency, the global share of renewable energy in the total energy supply, as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

2. We welcome the ongoing and future activities and commitments that have arisen from the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the International Conference for Renewable Energies, held in Bonn from 1 to 4 June 2004, the Gleneagles Summit of the Group of Eight and other international and regional initiatives that help promote renewable energy.

3. We emphasize the multiple benefits of increased energy efficiency and the use of renewable sources of energy for improving access to energy services, thereby contributing to the eradication of poverty as called for in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, increasing job opportunities, improving air quality and public health, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, combating climate change, enhancing energy security and offering a new paradigm for international cooperation.

4. We note with concern that more than 2 billion people in developing countries do not have access to modern energy services and that 2.4 billion people rely on traditional biomass for their basic energy needs. This energy divide entrenches poverty by limiting access to information, education, economic opportunity and healthier livelihoods, particularly for women and children, and erodes environmental sustainability at the local, national and global levels.

5. We also note with concern that recent trends in the world energy market, especially the doubling of oil prices in less than two years, have increased the economic risk of relying primarily on imported energy and a volatile world energy market. By developing local sources of energy such as hydro, wind, solar, geothermal and modern biomass, including liquid biofuels, countries can create diversified energy portfolios that are less vulnerable to wide price fluctuations. There is considerable scope, for example, for deploying biofuels in support of rural development and the transport sector.

6. Despite the growing expansion in the development and use of renewable sources of energy in developed countries, the combined share of renewable sources in the global primary energy supply remains small and limited. Most developing countries have not benefited from such expansion. The international community should strengthen its commitment to the scaling up of renewable energy development and use, especially in developing countries.

7. We agree to take further actions at the national, regional and international levels to accelerate the market uptake of renewable energy technologies and increase investment in research and development, especially by developed countries, in order to enhance efficiency and reduce up-front costs. We also agree on the need for strengthened support for the commercialization and transfer of technologies through North-South and South-South cooperation.

8. We recognize that in significantly increasing the use of renewable energy, we face a number of challenges. Government policies have a significant impact on attracting private sector investment and on the pace of expansion of renewable energy, as demonstrated in several developed and developing countries. Experience has shown that successful actions for scaling up the use of renewable energy include: (a) creating supportive policy, legal and institutional frameworks; (b) securing public sector commitment, including for research and development and procurement policies; (c) leveling the playing field; (d) promoting private sector involvement and a stronger alignment between policy time frames and timelines for investment; (e) supporting the establishment of national renewable energy industries, including small and medium enterprises; and (f) providing access to affordable financing, including micro-financing, and consumer credit mechanisms.

9. We also recognize the need for significant financial resources, both public and private, for investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency, including the use of innovative financing mechanisms, such as loan guarantees and the Clean Development Mechanism, and market-based instruments that can leverage scarce public funds. We are committed to creating a positive investment climate to attract private capital for renewable energy. We emphasize the catalytic role that financial incentives and higher shares of official development assistance can play, and we urge international financial institutions, including the World Bank, the regional development banks and the Global Environment Facility, as well as individual Governments, to significantly expand their investments in renewable energy technologies. We also urge international financial institutions and other actors to design improved instruments and products to ensure the effective blending of public and private financing, which should help in buying down the risks associated with renewable energy technologies.

10. We further emphasize the need for enhanced international cooperation for capacity-building in developing countries for: (a) strengthening national policy frameworks and the integration of renewable energy use into national sustainable development strategies for poverty reduction, health, education, and agriculture; (b) enhancing national capacity for research and development and transfer and diffusion of renewable energy technologies; (c) establishing markets for renewable energy; (d) increasing access to finance; (e) enterprise development for sourcing, installing, operating, and maintaining renewable energy systems; and (f) combining the increased use of renewable energy, energy efficiency and greater application of cleaner fossil fuel technologies.

11. We recognize the need for making technical assistance for renewable energy widely accessible to developing countries, especially the least developed countries. The United Nations system can and should play a key role in this regard. Its capacity and resources should be strengthened, and inter-agency cooperation should be enhanced in order to avoid fragmentation of effort. We also recognize the importance of disseminating information and knowledge, lessons learned and best

practices, and the scaling up of experiences in the development and application of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Connecting multi-stakeholders through networks as well as other international and regional initiatives should facilitate such exchanges and make information more accessible to developing countries.

12. We note with appreciation the major focus on energy in the upcoming 2006/07 cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development. We also note that the current global situation, including a growing awareness of energy poverty in developing countries, the risk of climate change and the important role that renewable energy should play in sustainable development and energy security, the increasing number of international initiatives and commitments and the volatility of world energy markets, provides an unprecedented opportunity for addressing the strategic challenge of transforming our energy systems and closing the energy divide between poor and rich, and between developing and developed countries. We invite the Commission to consider an effective arrangement to review and assess progress towards substantially increasing the global share of renewable energy as foreseen in paragraph 20 (e) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. This would provide a long-term perspective and encourage prompt action. Such a periodic review could offer opportunities for enhanced national, regional and international cooperation on renewable energy for sustainable development through, for example, the exchange of lessons learned and best practices, and a more favourable environment for technology transfer and the rapid commercialization of innovative renewable energy technologies. The review could also be useful in addressing the linkages between energy and the Commission's biannual thematic cluster and in enhancing voluntary reporting through inputs from relevant international organizations and networks.

13. We welcome the participation and contributions made at the Conference by parliamentarians, local and regional authorities, international institutions, the private sector, international industry associations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, women's groups, youth and academia and emphasize the importance of their continued role in increasing the development and use of renewable energy.

14. We express our deep appreciation and thanks to the people and the Government of the People's Republic of China for successfully organizing the Conference and for their generosity and hospitality. We kindly request the Chinese authorities to consider reporting the outcomes and declaration of the conference to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourteenth session.